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ASLEF

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ASLEF

STEP BY STEP

GAZA

THE WAY OF FOOLS

TUNNELS

THE INS AND OUTS

COMMISSIONS UNDERTAKEN FOR ORIGINAL OIL PAINTINGS AT COMPETITIVE PRICES

ARTIST

Frederick James Taylor
Guild of Railway Artists (Assoc. Member)
Guild of Wiltshire Artists

These pictures of my work show samples of oil paintings produced from black/white and colour photos. If you have a favourite photo or locomotive that you would like painted specifically for you, then please contact me to discuss your requirements.

Although I specialize in painting trains, I also undertake a wide variety of other subjects including aircraft, portraits, animals, landscapes etc. To find out more about my work, please log on to my website.



9F at Willesden circa 1963



GWR Dean Class at Brinkworth



The Princess Royal



King Edward I

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ASLEF MEANS MEMBERS, NOT NUMBERS



ASLEF recently received a copy of a letter sent to a former RMT member by Bob Crow urging him to stay in membership of RMT and not join ASLEF. The member concerned has joined ASLEF following his appointment to the grade of train driver.

In the letter Mr Crow refers to our union as an 'employer friendly organisation' and a 'club'. He goes on to point out that the RMT is a 'trade union' - inferring that ASLEF is not. In reality - a state Mr Crow rarely experiences - he should be concerned about how many of his traditional members are dissatisfied with the way his union represents them, and question why they want to join other organisations. I've recently reluctantly returned a number of application forms from conductors who are very dissatisfied with Mr Crow and his union.

The comments in his letter about our trade union are nothing less than disgraceful. We have referred it to the TUC - but don't hold out much hope of seeing action from this body.

Last year Mr Crow authorised the production of a DVD seeking to recruit train drivers which also attempted to show our union in a derogatory light. We sent it to the TUC with a formal complaint. The toothless TUC is content to stand by while our union is attacked. In the numbers game we matter very little to the TUC.

On the question of numbers, Unite's Mr Tony ('I've got two million members') Woodley considers that ASLEF has no right to represent our members at Croydon Tramlink. Three quarters of the drivers there willingly joined ASLEF and worked hard with us to secure formal recognition. We represented our members at Croydon for over eight years, and have worked very well with UNITE at the depot. However, Mr Woodley has now lodged a complaint about ASLEF with the TUC and yes - you have guessed it - the TUC immediately responded by sending us a letter requesting a meeting at Congress House.

ASLEF won't repeat the mistake we made at Manchester Metro when the TUC produced a letter signed by a former ASLEF general secretary giving away our recruitment rights at Metro.

Thanks to our membership at Croydon and to Steve Grant and Terry Wilkinson we have formal recognition with the company. We will not give up our members there, and we will not surrender our formal recognition. Derogatory attacks on our union are born from jealousy and envy.

Some trade union leaders cannot live with the fact that ASLEF is a strong, independent, effective, and now financially sound union with a very loyal membership. ASLEF members are members, not numbers on a union balance sheet. Long may this remain.

KEITH NORMAN
GENERAL SECRETARY



VIRGIN CALLS FOR END TO KISSING!

IN what Keith Norman called 'one of the daftest rail stories I've seen since privatisation', signs have been erected in the taxi rank at Warrington Bank Quay Station telling passengers to cut out kissing because it holds up commuters!

It is part of a £650,000 station refurbishment funded by Virgin Trains, Network Rail, the Northwest Regional Development Agency, the Department for Transport and Warrington Borough Council. When Colin Daniels, chief executive of Warrington's Chamber of Commerce suggested the ban he said it was 'all a bit of fun'.

Keith says this is proof – if it was needed – that train drivers and chief executives often have a different idea of what constitutes 'fun'.

SHEFFIELD TRAM INVESTMENT



Network Rail is to spend £15 million in track improvements and alterations to stations as part of the tram-train trial in Sheffield, with the Department for Transport contributing £9 million.

COMMONS MOTION SEEKS GUARANTEES ON RENEWALS



David Drew, the MP for Stroud in Gloucestershire and one of the ASLEF Group of MPs, last month submitted an Early Day Motion calling on the government to use its powers to ensure Network Rail does not defer renewal work. NR has said it intends to cut back by 28% in this area – which includes track and signals replacements. It also intends to cut back on the frequency of track inspections and routine signals maintenance.

ARRIVA'S UK TRAIN PROFITS UP BY 349%

It was revealed last month that train and bus firm Arriva saw its pre-tax profits for 2008 rise by 30%. Most of this was due to the performance of UK trains.

The operating profit for UK trains went up by 349%. (That's not a typing error: 349%!).

By comparison, the National Express Group had a torrid time last year. Their pre-tax profits only increased by a paltry 9.7% – from £177million to £194.1 million.

Recession? What recession?

NEW CORBY IS 'RAILWAY PLANNING IN A NUTSHELL'

ASLEF's general secretary Keith Norman says that the new station in Corby underlines everything he's been saying about a lack of proper planning in the rail industry. The Northants town's new £17 million station re-opened on 24th February – but because of a lack of rolling stock it only has one service a day!

'It looks a first class facility,' Keith says. 'And it could be called the station with everything – except trains and passengers!'

The single daily service which left for

London yesterday was the first Corby to London train for 43 years. East Midland Trains has undertaken to provide an hourly service 'as soon as we get the trains'. Keith confirmed, from the view point of a rail professional, that trains were a useful part of a railway service.

'I know these are cheap points to make, but there is a serious side to this,' he says. 'For rail to have a future means planning and investing decades ahead. We are not doing that. UK rail needs a new culture of forward planning for passenger needs.'

CONTINENTAL TRAIN BOOKING TOO COMPLEX

A report from the 'ethical tourism' organisation Responsible Travel suggests that it is not only the domestic fare structure that causes problems for potential passengers. The organisation says that booking tickets to the Continent on the internet is so complex that many people are likely to give up rather than book tickets.

A panel was asked to search for and simulate booking for return plane and train tickets on the internet to the European cities of Barcelona, Rome, Brussels and Munich. Despite a 98% success rate for booking plane tickets, only 13 of the 40 journeys (33%) were successfully booked by train, meaning 27 (67%) journeys could not be booked.

For those who were able to book, it took almost double the amount of time to book a train ticket (average time = 11.9 minutes) as it did to book a flight (average time = 6.6 minutes).

Justin Francis from the company says



that to reduce our carbon emissions we need to start travelling more by train and less by plane in Europe – but claims that the exercise shows that European rail travel is 'infuriatingly difficult to book from the UK'.

'If we are going to work together for a lower carbon future for travel and tourism, more straightforward booking is an essential part of the solution.'

COMPANY NEWS

PAY 2008

ISLAND LINE: The EC accepted a one year pay offer from Island Line of 4.8% wef 6th October 2008.

GATWICK EXPRESS: The EC accepted a one year pay increase of 3.3% on Gatwick Express.

REST DAY WORKING

The EC sanctioned Rest Day Working on Arriva Trains Wales until 25 April 2009
First Great Western until 27 March 2010
South West Trains until 30 January 2010
DRS until 27 March 2010
GB Railfreight until 25 April 2009
Hull Trains until 26 December 2009
Northern Rail – East until 16 May 2009

Northern Rail – West until 16 May 2009

First Transpennine Express until 26 September 2009

London Midland until 25 April 2009

Freightliner Intermodal Free Turn Working until 25 April 2009

COMPANY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

First Great Western (Former Wessex)

Company Council Representative ~
Constituency 1, Bro H Rugg, Portsmouth & IOW Branch

First Great Western (Former Wessex),
Company Council Representative ~
Constituency 2

Bro S Newton, Exeter Branch



Southeastern's new class

CLASS 395 ARRIVES A YEAR EARLY!

SOUTHEASTERN has run its first Class 395 'bullet train' into St Pancras station – a year early! The test train reached speeds of 140 miles an hour as it made the journey from Ashford in 37 minutes – almost an hour less than the current timetable from Ashford to London.

The testing of the train should be completed later this month and 29 of the new trains will come into service from Kent to London at the end of 2009. They will however have to maintain normal speed limits of 100 mph on normal rail tracks.

The 395 will be in the spotlight in 2012 when it is used for the Olympic Games, speeding spectators from St Pancras to Stratford in just seven minutes.



LONDON GLASGOW SPEEDS UP

Virgin Trains High Frequency (VHF) services between London and Glasgow can cut travelling time from over four-and-a-half hours to four hours and ten minutes. This is the fastest ever daily rail schedule linking the two cities and follows completion of the £9bn modernisation of the West Coast Main Line. There are now 13 weekday trains running in each direction.

The Pendolino leaving Euston at 1630 will only stop once, at Preston.

PARTNERSHIP FOR AMNESTY AND THE TUC

Amnesty International and the TUC have signed an agreement setting out how the two organisations will work more closely to achieve improved international labour and human rights.

Amnesty established a trade union network 30 years ago but this is the first time the two organisations have committed to campaign together on behalf of workers all over the world and support each other's efforts to attract new supporters.

431 ATTACKS ON RAIL STAFF IN WALES IN 2008

FIGURES obtained through the Freedom of Information Act by the Welsh Assembly Labour Group show that there were 431 attacks across Wales on train and bus staff during 2008. Workers at Arriva Trains Wales, who suffered 129 attacks, lost more than 354 days off work due to recovering from injuries or trauma.

Jeff Cuthbert, the Assembly Member for Caerphilly, denounced the figures as 'a national scandal' as he urged members of the public to show support for their drivers. About 5,000 assaults a year are reported across the rail industry, 11% of which result in the worker needing time off.

ASLEF's general secretary Keith Norman said, 'I'm grateful to Jeff Cuthbert and the Labour Group on the Welsh Assembly for drawing attention to the problem.

'It is almost incredible that the men and women who provide the public's transport system should have to feel threatened at work.

'No train driver should have to put up with being abused or spat at. No train's safety should be jeopardised by objects left on the line. No driver should be injured by concrete dropped from a bridge. Yet our members have had to face all these hazards.

'ASLEF supports stiff penalties for offenders, but we are even more keen to see an active prevention strategy which would involve everyone from passengers and police to school-children and families.'

PASSENGERS CAN PUSH OFF AT WATERLOO!

SOUTH WEST TRAINS has launched a cycle hire scheme at Waterloo station in conjunction with Brompton Bicycle. This 'green' initiative aims at encouraging passengers to cycle after leaving the train so they have a 'fully integrated low carbon journey'. Season ticket holders are being offered a three-month free trial.

The UK's national cyclist organisation has endorsed the initiative, pointing out



that the number of people cycling on London's major roads has nearly doubled since 2000.

Passengers will be able to hire the bicycles from the Lost Property Office at Waterloo station.

COMPENSATION FOR SLIP HAZARD

Luchiano Wijesuriya, a tube train driver who tripped and fell on a badly-lit and ill-maintained footpath at Loughton Sidings has received almost £4,000 in compensation after badly injuring his knee. Luchiano had warned management about the potential hazard three or four times before the accident.

He turned to ASLEF, and the union solicitors Thompsons, after tripping on a loose cable and falling on his right knee tearing his ligaments. He now has to wear a brace when playing sport and may have to undergo knee surgery.

London Underground settled out of court after Luchiano needed to take several weeks off work and had his family holiday ruined by the injury.

Access to the sidings has now been refurbished, but Keith Norman says it shouldn't have required an accident before the work was carried out. He points out that slips and trips are the single most common cause of injury in UK workplaces.

TRIAL FOR RECYCLED PLASTIC SLEEPERS

Network Rail (NR) is set to begin a two-year trial of sleepers made from recycled plastic. Some 20 tonnes of waste material will be recycled to make the new sleepers which will replace the timber variety along some rural lines. The trial is to establish whether they can withstand the rigours of a running railway.

Timber sleepers are used extensively on slower lines, depots, sidings and points at junctions and around 185,000 are replaced annually.

In addition to the environmental advantages the recycled versions could prove cheaper when compared to importing hardwood beams.

STILL NO ATP 20 YEARS AFTER PURLEY CRASH

THE Purley rail crash happened just 20 years ago last month. Driver Bob Morgan was unjustly convicted of being culpable and it took 18 years to clear his name in the High Court – but even slower is progress on installing the Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system that was recommended after the tragedy.

ATP is installed all over the continent, but hardly exists in the UK. ASLEF's Keith Norman says he knows why it has never been introduced. 'In one word – money,' he says. 'It is scandalous that accidents have happened and lives have been lost that could have been prevented,' Keith says. 'It makes a mockery of the

phrase, 'Safety is our number one priority' which is trotted out every time there is an incident.

'The Hidden inquiry into the Clapham rail crash six months after Purley spelled out that ATP should be installed across the rail network. A couple of decades later there are small areas covered in Western and Chiltern.

'It would be a fitting tribute to those who died at Purley, and to Bob whose life was unfairly devastated if Network Rail was to announce today that ATP will be installed across the UK.'

'But I suspect that attraction to profit will once again outweigh commitment to safety.'

PLAQUE COMMEMORATES RIOTING SALISBURY



ON 12 February, members of the Salisbury and District Trades Union Council stood proudly at the special unveiling of a plaque commemorating the Salisbury Swing Riots of 1830.

The Riots were the first example of people, agriculture workers in this case, standing together against the land owners and their new thrashing machines which deprived workers of their livelihoods and homes. Many needed to steal food just to survive.

The plaque stands in Salisbury's Guildhall in the very same Crown Court where more than 100 workers were tried for the Swing Riots. Heavy sentences were passed down to set an example. Many workers were transported to Australia and in at least one extreme case they were hung.

Special thanks must go to the union branches that contributed towards the plaque which greatly helped Salisbury and District TUC realise their dream and gave it much momentum.

Special thanks should also be extended to Carol and Dave Tompkins for all their fund raising efforts and for arranging the plaque. Thank you also Anita Goddard who organised a wonderful evening in the Guildhall with a constant supply of drink and nibbles.



Pictured with the plaque is Salisbury & District TUC and ASLEF stalwart, retired member Dennis Smith and his wife Joyce along with Branch Secretary Tom Corbin and wife Caroline.



Mick Whelan speaking at the Westminister rally

ASLEF BACKS PUBLIC ROYAL MAIL

MICK WHELAN deputised for the general secretary at last month's Westminister rally calling on the government to drop plans to part-privatise the Royal Mail. Despite a Labour manifesto commitment to keep the industry in the public sector, Peter Mandelson has pushed ahead with plans to sell off part of the business to a foreign company.

Mick stressed our union's experience of the privati-

sation of rail, dwelled on the 'fallacy of competition' and warned about pension difficulties in a post-privatisation industry. He pointed out how both industries had 'enhanced and unified the social, economic and cultural fabric of the country' and recalled how the two unions had been of a single mind when discussing privatisation at Labour's Warwick policy forum.

Mick assured postal workers of ASLEF support not only on the day, but in the months to come.

● The CWU has asked ASLEF members to sign the 10 Downing Street petition which rejects any sale which could 'lead to loss of service, price hikes and erode a much loved public service'. The on-line petition is to be found at <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Royal-Mail-Sale/>

THE DRAMA OF MAGGIE'S END

THE North East Area of the NUM is putting on the hit play *Maggie's End* at the Shaw Theatre by Euston Station from 7 – 18 April. The aim is to provide a focal point to events surrounding the 25th anniversary of the miner's strike of 1984/5.

Maggie's End is a dark comedy that starts with the death of Margaret Thatcher and deals with New Labour proposals to give her a state funeral.

The event will also include book launches, exhibitions of photos and banners, singers, comedians and a brass band. For more information about this 'celebration of the labour movement' either call Davey Hopper on 0777 563 0398 or to book tickets contact the Shaw Theatre on 0871 594 3 123.



'SCANDAL' OF RAIL FARES 50% MORE THAN EUROPE'

ASLEF general secretary Keith Norman says it is 'a scandal' that rail fares in the UK cost 50% more than they do on the Continent. 'It is not enough for transport minister Andrew Adonis to say that the only way to reduce fares is to raise taxes. The government doesn't say this when it doles out money to the banks – so why should rail passengers be treated differently from the financial elite? The only difference I see is that passengers – unlike bankers – have done no wrong.'

Keith says that the relatively high cost of UK rail travel puts the government's whole environmental strategy in chaos. 'We will find passengers turning away from the clean transport option of rail and returning to their cars,' he says. 'It doesn't need a Treasury boffin to deduce that high prices stop demand.'

The union fears that the gap between UK and Continental rail fares will keep rising if the government continues to insist that passengers should bear 75% of the burden of paying for the railways by 2014 – and points out that facilities are often better abroad. The government aims to drop its investment from about £5bn a year to £3bn, while it expects fare payers to contribute £9bn to the rail network by 2014. Inevitably

this would mean making UK fares even more expensive.

Meanwhile the Department for Transport said today that it would cost some £500m a year to bring fares into line with other European countries.

'Perhaps the government should be talking to the rail companies about the profits they are making before deciding to bash the passenger,' Keith says. 'After all, Go-Ahead Group made an operating profit of £77.2 million in the year to last June, Stagecoach, had pre-tax profits of £105.2 million for the six months to September and First Group recorded an interim six-month operating profit of £48.3 million to September.'



SIMON WELLER IS NEW NATIONAL ORGANISER

SIMON WELLER is the union's new National Organiser. The result of the ballot announced last month showed a clear majority for Simon and has secured him a five-year term of office.

General Secretary Keith Norman congratulated the new National Officer, and thanked all three candidates for a 'dignified and respectful' ballot.

Over 64% of members who voted did so for Simon. Obviously delighted at the result, he thanked all those who had supported him and pledged to do all he could to ensure 'continuing improvement in our members' conditions and increased success and recognition for our proud and unique union'.

Runner-up Kevin Lindsay thanked people who had supported him, congratulated Bro Weller on his election victory and commiserated with Bro Amour. 'Our industry is facing many challenges in the coming years and if ASLEF is to meet these challenges we must stand united. Therefore we must all support our Executive Committee and officers in the difficult decisions they face,' he said.

DISCIPLINE PROMPTS BALLOT AT NXEA

THE result of a union ballot for industrial action in NX East Anglia is due to be announced shortly after the publication of this Journal. The vote was provoked by the company applying 'draconian' discipline. The branch insists that there is an 'almost total breakdown in industrial relations'.

District Organiser Andy Morrison says a concerted attack is being made on ASLEF members through the disciplinary procedures and by an 'inconsistent and heavy-handed' use of the Competence Development Process (CDP). 'There is almost a culture of mistrust in the company,' Andy says. 'Management also seems to be cutting back on time off for union representatives when the number of members they represent has increased and the area they cover has widened.'

The ballot result is due to be announced on 9 April.



ASLEF JOIN LOCAL ACTIVISTS TO DEMAND TRAMLINK EXTENSION

ASLEF members joined local residents at a public meeting on 10 March in Stanley Halls, South Norwood to demand the reinstatement of the Tramlink extension to Crystal Palace, reports **DAVID GOULD**. The meeting was called by Labour's ASLEF-backed prospective parliamentary candidate for Croydon Central, Gerry Ryan.

The 40 people who attended heard Gerry along with Val Shawcross, Labour London Assembly member and chair of the Assembly's Transport Committee and current independent MP Andrew Pelling, explain that the extension had cross-party support in the borough. The meeting learnt that the planned extension would cost £62 million, a drop in the ocean considering TfL's annual budget of £8.5 billion.

Transport for London had already drawn up detailed plans for the extension which would link Croydon to Crystal Palace but the plan was scrapped by Boris Johnson shortly after his election to Mayor. Each speaker explained the enormous benefits that the extension would have for local residents, businesses and the environment.

ASLEF activist Finn Brenan told the panel of the importance of such schemes and attacked the cuts the Mayor had made to transport projects since his election.

The meeting concluded that the local community and representatives in the area must come together in order to demand the extension that the tram system deserves.

HAZARD ON THE LINE, INDIAN STYLE

SPARE a thought for our Indian counterparts. Hazards on the line in that country include elephants on the line. In fact, no less than 118 Asian elephants, an endangered species that can weigh up to 5 tonnes, have died on rail lines since 1987 – but surprisingly only one caused a derailment.



Elephant killed in train accident in Tamil Nadu in southern India. Photo: B Ramakrishnan - Wildlife Trust of India

DOWN IN DUNDEE: ASLEF AT SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE



- a report by the union's Head of Policy **James McGowan**

ASLEF's delegation to the 2009 Scottish Labour Party Conference at the Caird Hall, Dundee consisted of District Organiser Kevin Lindsay, Jim Lafferty (Motherwell) and Rab Wickstead (Edinburgh No 2).

Prime Minister Gordon Brown's somewhat underwhelming conference address focused on the morality of the banking system and the need to progress the issue at the G20 meeting as well as attacking the SNP while the weekend subjected delegates to a series of forgettable presentations from Cabinet ministers such as Harriet Harman, Ed Miliband and James Purnell although Scottish Secretary Jim Murphy did stir the ranks with his admonishment against 'credit crunch racism.'

The ASLEF delegation distributed copies of the Scottish Journal insert which was well received by delegates as well as lobbying a range of MPs, MSPs and councillors including a private meeting with Iain Gray

during which delegation leader Kevin Lindsay pressed the case for running the Scotrail franchise on a not-for-profit basis.

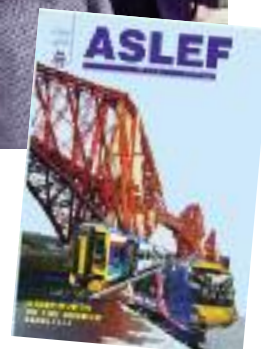
Iain Gray used his inaugural conference speech as Scottish Labour Leader to urge the Party to build on the success of the Glenrothes by-election, chiding the nationalists for failing to honour election promises to pay off student debt and give grants to first time buyers while announcing the formation of four policy forums with a sounding board of experts. Elsewhere stand-out contributions of the weekend included a personal yet policy heavy analysis from Party Chair Dave Watson as well as a humorous and engaging analysis from local MP Jim McGovern while Glasgow City Council Chief Stephen Purcell issued the much lauded announcement of a new living wage of £7 an hour for all the local authority's employees.

ASLEF sponsored MSP Karen Whitefield seconded a motion backing a private members bill calling for greater protection for transport workers, drawing particular attention to the issues faced by train drivers while ASLEF supported Glasgow MSP Bill Butler's passionate plea for a better deal for



The delegation with ASLEF sponsored MSP Karen Whitefield

ASLEF's Scottish supplement was well received



rail in Scotland received much appreciative applause. In addition the union strongly backed the Communication Workers Union's anti-postal privatisation campaign both on the floor of the Conference, on the street and in fringe meetings.

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Tel: 01623 646789 or see us also at www.repta.co.uk

KAUFMAN: ANOTHER VIEW OF GAZA

During Israel's most recent devastating invasion of Gaza, **Gerald Kaufman** made a remarkably powerful speech in Parliament explaining how it feels to be a Jew who feels anger against the state of Israel. Gerald, a Manchester MP for almost 40 years, told us he was happy for us to reproduce this personal and moving account ...

WAS brought up as an orthodox Jew and a Zionist. On a shelf in our kitchen, there was a tin box for the Jewish National Fund, into which we put coins to help the pioneers building a Jewish presence in Palestine.

I first went to Israel in 1961 and I have been there since more times than I can count. I had family in Israel and have friends in Israel. One of them fought in the wars of 1956, 1967 and 1973 and was wounded in two of them. I have known most of the Prime Ministers of Israel, starting with the founding Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. Golda Meir was my friend, as was Yigal Allon, Deputy Prime Minister, who, as a general, won the Negev for Israel in the 1948 war of independence.

My parents came to Britain as refugees from Poland. Most of their families were subsequently murdered by the Nazis in the holocaust. My grandmother was ill in bed when the Nazis came to her home town of Staszow. A German soldier shot her dead in her bed.

My grandmother did not die to provide cover for Israeli soldiers murdering Palestinian grandmothers in Gaza. The current Israeli Government ruthlessly and cynically exploit the continuing guilt

among gentiles over the slaughter of Jews in the holocaust as justification for their murder of Palestinians. The implication is that Jewish lives are precious, but the lives of Palestinians do not count.

On Sky News a few days ago, the spokeswoman for the Israeli army, Major Leibovich, was asked about the Israeli killing of, at that time, 800 Palestinians—the total is now 1,000. She replied instantly that, '500 of them were militants.'

That was the reply of a Nazi. I suppose that the Jews fighting for their lives in the Warsaw ghetto could have been dismissed as militants.

The Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni asserts that her Government will have no dealings with Hamas, because they are terrorists. Tzipi Livni's father was Eitan Livni, chief operations officer of the terrorist Irgun Zvai Leumi, who organised the blowing-up of the King David hotel in Jerusalem, in which 91 victims were killed, including four Jews.

Israel was born out of Jewish terrorism. Jewish terrorists hanged two British sergeants and booby-trapped their corpses. Irgun, together with the terrorist Stern gang, massacred 254 Palestinians in 1948 in the village of Deir Yassin. Today, the current Israeli Government indicate that they would be willing, in circumstances acceptable to them, to negotiate with the Palestinian President Abbas of Fatah. It is too late for that. They could have negotiated with Fatah's previous leader, Yasser Arafat, who was a friend of mine. Instead, they besieged him in a bunker in Ramallah, where I visited him. Because of the failings of Fatah since Arafat's death, Hamas won the Palestinian election in 2006. Hamas is a deeply nasty organisation, but it was democratically elected, and it is the only game in town. The boycotting of Hamas, including by our Government, has been a culpable error, from which dreadful consequences have followed.

The great Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, with whom I campaigned for peace



The veteran Labour MP, Gerald Kaufman

on many platforms, said, 'You make peace by talking to your enemies.'

However many Palestinians the Israelis murder in Gaza, they cannot solve this existential problem by military means. Whenever and however the fighting ends, there will still be 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza and 2.5 million more on the west bank. They are treated like dirt by the Israelis, with hundreds of road blocks and with the ghastly denizens of the illegal Jewish settlements harassing them as well. The time will come, not so long from now, when they will outnumber the Jewish population in Israel.

It is time for our Government to make clear to the Israeli Government that their conduct and policies are unacceptable, and to impose a total arms ban on Israel. It is time for peace, but real peace, not the solution by conquest which is the Israelis' real goal but which it is impossible for them to achieve. They are not simply war criminals; they are fools.

● 'The TUC has renewed its call to union members to contribute to the TUC's Give for Gaza appeal which provides humanitarian aid to the citizens of Gaza. In its first month UK trade unionists donated £28,000 through TUC Aid. It was sent via the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

Donations to the appeal should be made payable to 'TUC Aid – Give for Gaza' and sent to TUC Aid, EUIRD, TUC, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LS. It is also possible to donate on-line at www.tuc.org.uk/tucaid and www.tuc.org.uk/giveforgaza



Tzipi Livni's Kadima Party won the most seats in Israel's recent election



argues Trains Council Rep **Finn Brennan**

A KEY issue for ASLEF's Trains Council reps is the impact of line upgrades on Train Drivers. Opening new depots, introducing changed service patterns, new stock and automatic train operation on some lines mean changes in how we work. For management these changes are all about increased efficiency and a bet-

ter train service - but we want to make sure that our members benefit from these changes as well.

In 2008 a new Train Crew depot opened at Stratford. While this meant improved accommodation, many drivers who were formerly at North Greenwich were extremely unhappy about how the move was handled. Jubilee line management simply refused to openly and honestly share their plans for the line with drivers and your Union. North Greenwich depot remained open, but the drivers there feel

their concerns have been ignored and their facilities are inadequate. The result has been continued resentment and a breakdown in trust that will take a long time to mend.

With management planning new depots this year for Brixton and Harrow, and at High Barnet in early 2010, we are insisting on much better and earlier information for our reps on plans for roster and duty changes. We also want to ensure that duties at depots remain balanced across the roster so that drivers are not

forced to move depot to keep their preferred shift pattern. We will also be examining if improvements can be made to the Transfer Arrangements (TT/AA) so that members have more certainty about the impact of changes in depot establishments in the future.

The introduction of new stock has also raised contentious issues on both the Victoria and Sub Surface lines (SSR). Current cab design for the S stock does not include an opening cab window. Metropolitan line drivers feel

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strongly that LUL should take into account the wishes of those who actually have to spend 8 hours a day in the driving cab. To add insult to injury, the new London Overground stock which is similar in design and is being built alongside the S stock has an opening window.

ASLEF is pursuing this through the disputes resolution machinery. We are also raising our concerns about the positioning of in cab equipment that means instructor operators will not have a clear view when training new drivers.

December will see a new service pattern on SSR that will increase driver numbers on the C&H and Met lines. The 'extended Circle' will mean trains running from Hammersmith to Edgware Road, and then travelling around the existing Circle line route via Aldgate, before reversing at Edgware Road. Management seem to believe that this will mean major improvements to service reliability but drivers remain sceptical as we have had similar promises before. Detailed consultation on duty changes will take place at local level.

Upgrade work has meant major disruption with engineering work effecting some part of the combine virtually every weekend. We have held a number of meetings with management and put proposals to them that would reduce the impact on drivers; once again 'efficiency' is the excuse given for failing to improve working arrangements for our members.

One area where we believe LUL has huge scope for efficiency savings is the amount of time and energy they put into spying on drivers. Not content with having 'black boxes' that record everything we do in the cab, and cameras that record everything we do out of it, there is now a small army of managers travelling as passengers around the system listening to the announcements we make. While we are opposed to all job cuts, in these hard economic times we are sure that these people could be rather more gainfully employed.

BUYING BACK PENSIONS

- a report from Fund Trustee **John Robson**

The Pension Fund has re-examined cases of people who did not join the pension fund at the earliest time available to them. All those identified have been written to and asked to reply with information as to their entitlement.

However, certain people were legitimately excluded for various reasons.

These include

- those employed on a fixed term contract and in accordance with employment legislation at the time were not eligible to join the fund
- those whose contract specified a waiting period to join the fund
- those not eligible to join the fund, for example they were below the minimum age to join
- those who chose not to join the fund at the time they were first eligible.

ASLEF still believes that all those in the above categories were unfairly treated and we are still pursuing these points of principle with the company and the fund.

Those entitled to buy back time in the fund include those whose training period was not treated as pensionable and those employees who did not become members of the fund at the first opportunity on becoming permanent employees after a period of fixed term contract employment despite being eligible to join on becoming permanent.

UNION MAKES EFFORTS TO RESOLVE DISPUTES ON ATTENDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

reports **Steven Crowley**,
Secretary of the Trains
Functional Council's Staff Side

Over the last two years, senior management has attempted to ignore or circumvent the Attendance at Work and Disciplinary policies. Local managers have been given a free hand to 'do what they have to' to achieve the company's target of 96% attendance levels.

In essence the company said that they would abide by the Attendance at Work procedure - but interpret it as they saw fit. As the Guidelines for Managers (used consistently in previous years) did not enable them to achieve their ends, its interpretation was being 'varied'.

The situation became so bad in these areas - and on other significant issues including health and safety - that ASLEF informed the company that we would be in dispute if our concerns were not hastily addressed. As a result a series of weekly meetings was set up involving LUL's Chief Operating Officer and Director of Employee Relations. This is a brief summary of the latest of these meetings.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The existing grievance procedure was declared 'outside legislation' nearly two years ago. ASLEF provided the company with a draft explicitly covering

what was required by law, but in five meetings, management failed to discuss or resolve the process. With new legislation proposed for April 2009 it is obviously urgent to have a legal grievance procedure in place. A meeting has been scheduled later this month.

ATTENDANCE The company sent out an instruction that all level 1 and 2 sanctions should be maximised to 26 / 52 weeks. ASLEF has now been assured that this will not be the case.

ASLEF also said it was unacceptable at disciplinary hearings to raise both general sickness (2 items in 13/26 weeks as triggers) and patterns of sickness (for example being off sick on 3 consecutive Christmases) at the same time. Management agreed.

ASLEF said that for first stage disciplinary hearings for attendance the maximum length caution was 26 weeks - and not 52 weeks. The Company said 52 week cautions were only issued for exceptional cases - which the union challenged.

ASLEF argued it was unreasonable that staff off for prolonged periods of sickness should make contact every day. Management conceded that contact arrangements would be mutually agreed.

A Trains Functional Council agreement says if a train operator was off work sick but required to come in for a meeting, they would be entitled to ask for a representative to be present. Some managers had insisted that 28 days had to elapse first, but the agreement

has now been endorsed.

OTHER ISSUES Management agreed that Directors Appeals can be requested for Local Disciplinary Interviews on matters of principle and two have subsequently been arranged.

This is only a flavour of what ASLEF is putting right within the company and it's unfortunate that we have to be ever-vigilant to preventing successive managers from taking on our conditions.

LUL PAY UPDATE

Further talks are scheduled with LUL management after union negotiators dismissed an initial offer as 'flippant'. The rejected offer consisted of a five-year deal offering the Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 1% for year one, and just RPI for subsequent years.

'We will be looking for decent pay rises that reflect the professionalism and specialism of our members,' said lead officer Steve Grant.

Members will be kept up to date with developments after the next pay meeting.

£30K PLUS TARGET FOR CROYDON PAY

Lead negotiator Steve Grant says pay levels for Croydon Tramlink members should reach £30,000. This is why he urged rejection of the latest company offer. This raised salaries to £29,713 after including a 4% increase and the consolidation of a discretionary bonus.

The union is seeking further discussions as a matter of urgency.

HOW CAN ASLEF

Last month a driver who had just completed a visit to head office told me that he hadn't realised how involved it was to run an efficient union. I told him this was no reflection on him – for most ASLEF members 'the union' means the local rep. This is the most important person in any union, the person who is at hand, the first point of contact. In fact many members will never encounter any representative other than at branch level.

It was an interesting exercise for me to map out this article, because it brought home to me again the fact that the union is most relevant to most members locally, and least relevant nationally. At times we

BRANCH ORGANISATION

The local union branch is the cornerstone of the union's organisation. All representatives - local, company council, H&S, District Organisers and EC - are obliged to report to the branches.

Most members contact with the union will be with their local representative (or 'LDC'). These people are predominantly depot-based and deal with current local issues for the group of members they work alongside.

Most of the union's policies stem from proposals made at a branch meeting. This can mean items which never go further than the depot – on rosters, for example, or specific safety points – to ones that end up making national policy on pensions or affiliations.

A member wanting a change in the union will go along to a branch meeting and argue the case. If it is successful in getting a majority at the branch, the branch officers or local reps will take it up and argue the point, usually with management. Or it may be a proposal to affiliate to a local transport campaign, in which case the branch officers will make the arrangements. This is where the branch officers get their information and instructions. It is how the members control their union, oversee their branch finances (a proportion of all members' subscriptions goes to the branch) and where each December all branch positions are put up for election. ASLEF is a democratic trade union for train drivers, represented by train drivers. All positions are elected, from local level representative to the general secretary.

Every branch has the right to put four proposals (or motions) to the union's parliament, the Annual Assembly of Delegates about policies or strategies and

make unlimited changes to the union rule-book.

One of the most important reps in the branch is the Health and Safety representative. Their role is self-explanatory but they have considerable influence with management on our working lives, largely because they are backed up by relatively specific laws. They are central to the union, constantly liaising with other representatives where their roles and responsibilities overlap.

COMPANY COUNCILS

Each company has a Company Council elected by union members as the next tier above local level reps to deal with company-specific issues. This means that the items passed at a branch meeting concerning a company are negotiated by ASLEF members employed by that company. They also take up issues which have not been resolved by the local reps.

If a specific item is raised at the branch about an issue across the company, the branch secretary will tell the company council of the decision. The company council may consult other branches and reps that the decision could affect, and will raise the matter with the company.

The Company Councils are responsible directly to the people who put them in these positions, and for whom they work. They are where the union meets management to discuss, debate and hopefully agree on all conditions of service including pay.

Before they sign off agreements which fundamentally affect terms and conditions, however, they report the outcome of negotiations to the Executive Committee which acts as the voice of the entire, rather than sectional membership. This is to ensure that

nothing is agreed outside national policy or which undersells any company member.

ORGANISATION AT DISTRICT LEVEL

DISTRICT COUNCIL

These are primarily an information dissemination forum where EC members and District Organisers brief branch secretaries on policy and company issues and receive feedback on various area depot or company concerns.

Every branch elects a representative to attend District Council meetings. ASLEF is divided into eight Districts, each of which has a full-time union employee as its Organiser.

The central aim of District Council meetings is to examine the policies and progress being made within the branches. For example a branch representative might report that it has secured a particular benefit which the others have not achieved, or perhaps even considered. After consultation with those concerned, it will probably be sought in other areas.

It is also an opportunity for a particular branch to seek assistance from neighbours if it has particular difficulties (such as recruitment), to arrange meetings or initiatives of concern to the wider area and affiliate to other district based organisations (including the Labour Party). Education opportunities are also agreed and advanced at the Councils.

REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEES

The District Councils also receive reports from ASLEF's four Representative Committees (which used to be called Consultative Committees) These are the

- Black and Ethnic Minority Representative

HOW MEMBERS CONTROL THE UNION



MACHINERY RE



WORK FOR YOU?

can become obsessed with national activities and it's good to be reminded regularly of where ASLEF's work is most important. That is why it is important for all our officers – myself included – to have regular contact with ordinary members at training schools, branch meetings or social events. I know we'll never have a union where every member is an activist – but equally I'd like everyone to know what is available and how you can use the union to your best advantage. This outline is produced with this end in mind ...

Keith Norman – General Secretary

Committee (BEMRC)

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans Representatives Committee (LGBTRC)
- Womens' Representatives Committee (WRC)
- Retired Members Section

The point of these committees was to provide a forum for members to raise issues which they may feel inhibited from raising in their branch. A member might want the union to take a stance on homophobic bullying, for example, but choose not to reveal his or her sexuality. The union wanted to prevent members of minority groups from feeling isolated and to give them a place to discuss and advance their particular concerns.

The issue of inadequate toilet facilities for women that can prevent their employment was first raised in the Women's committee and has since progressed through the AAD to the national TUC where changes to the law are being discussed.

This was possible because each of the Representative Committees has the right to submit motions for discussion to the Annual Assembly of Delegates. Their discussions are also reported to the Executive Committee.

Each of these committees has eight representatives, with one elected on an annual basis from each of the union's Districts.

NATIONAL LEVEL ORGANISATION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In the 51 weeks of the year when the Annual Assembly of Delegates is not in session, its powers and duties are delegated to ASLEF's Executive Committee. This is made up of one person elected directly every four years from each of the eight districts. Having all the

authority of the AAD, it can begin legal proceedings, call industrial action and call elections and must implement the union's rules and carry out the union's democratically-agreed decisions.

It is responsible for creating and implementing policy, for all pay and agreements, traction and training, political contacts, affiliations and strategy – the whole range of the union's activities.

It also oversees union activities such as our Proud to Educate initiative, which provides life-long learning opportunities for our members through the branch based union learning representatives.

APPEALS COMMITTEE

ASLEF's concern for fairness is demonstrated by its Appeals Committee. While it meets infrequently, it enables any member, branch or officer to appeal against, and possibly put aside, a decision of the Executive Committee.

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES (AAD)

Annual Assembly of Delegates (AAD) is ASLEF's parliament, the bed-rock of its democratic nature. Every branch has the right to propose policy changes and the opportunity to send a delegate to the event where the union's priorities are established and its work for the year is given direction.

The democratic nature of ASLEF is spelled out by certain procedures which can appear bizarre to the newcomer. In contrast to just about every other company shareholders' meeting or general trade union, the executive committee has only an observing role at the AAD as they have no vote and only the President or Vice-President can speak on their behalf. In most organisations the 'leaders' are there to set the agenda, make the speeches and argue for what they want. In ASLEF it is different. The members, through their branch representatives, are the ones who control the entire event. It is an example of democracy in action.

THE UNION'S EMPLOYEES

The union's employees – including all the head office staff, the regional officers, the National Organiser and the General Secretary – are there not to make policy, but to carry it out. They receive their instructions from the members via the EC or AAD.

Of course our general secretary and other officers have influence, but they have no right to act without the authority of the EC or the AAD.

That is how it should be in a democratic union such as our own.

● *Many thanks to Mick Whelan and Simon Weller for their assistance in compiling this brief guide.*



REPRESENTATIVES

IL REPS

DISTRICT OFFICERS



*We tracked
down Neil in
Huddersfield ...*

THE BENTLEY WHO DRIVES A PARTNERSHIP

'NEIL BENTLEY would be a good person to talk to for the Key Worker column,' Pauline Cawood told me. 'If you can catch him, that is. He never stops.'

Neil lives up to this reputation from the start. When I phone him I hear an international ringing tone. He is in Switzerland, one of his favourite places, where he's sledging with his girlfriend Rachel, who's a conductor. But that's not enough to deter the ASLEF Journal. A couple of weeks later Chris Proctor tracked him down on the 1429 train from Wakefield to Huddersfield. Neil was in the driving seat, so it was a pretty sure bet that we'd nab him before he dashed off.

It's impossible not to be affected by Neil's enthusiasm. He sounds like a bonus-driven salesman when he speaks about the Penistone Line, a community rail project to which he's devoted a lot of time and energy since first becoming involved in 1993. He's been chairman of the Partnership for the past five years.

'Why did I get involved? For a number of reasons. I'm really committed to public transport, partly because it helps stop

social exclusion. Everyone has the right to a reasonably-priced and accessible public transport system.

'Also, while it grows there are more jobs for drivers. We've created a few jobs here because of our success. The Penistone Line also guarantees a future for the depot at Huddersfield.

'I think it's worth the effort we all put in.'

Throughout our talk Neil keeps stressing that 'this is no one-man band'. 'I'm just one of the people involved,' he says. 'What we've achieved, we've achieved together.' It's a measure of his honesty and generosity that he name-checks just about every person and rail company in Yorkshire by the time we're finished!

Now 34, Neil's always had an interest in travel in general, and railways in particular. He recalls clambering up onto the footplate of the Mallard as a young lad. 'It was any boy's dream,' he says.

But when he joined the railway at 17 after sixth form, it was as a guard in his native Leeds. Later he became a Customer Welcome Host at Huddersfield, sometimes covering the Station Supervisor's job. He began his driver training

in 1999. 'I've enjoyed every job I've had on the railway,' he says. 'I'm glad I've seen the industry from several different perspectives - it helps you appreciate the challenges across the whole operation rather than just your own area.'

I wonder if he had any of the reservations about community rail that some people held in its early days. The answer's a straight no.

'I can't see how anyone can be against a railway that brings communities together, creates jobs, involves people and keeps lines alive,' he says. 'And I know there were some grumblings when the tram-train idea was first mooted. I just think that instead of knowing six types of traction, we'll know seven. I was talking to a driver in Germany who said he was driving a tram that day and taking a high-speed loco to Hamburg the next. It's not a problem as far as I can see.'

This is why he's so positive about the use of the Penistone Line for a trial of tram-trains. It will start with brand spanking new kit in 2010 when trams will be used exclusively on the Huddersfield to Barnsley stretch, so that the wear and tear on the track can be measured. 'I'm sure it can be as big a success as the Penistone Line itself,' Neil says. 'Passenger numbers have increased much more than the national average. It's a real success story.'

And part of that success is down to Neil and others like him. They have genuinely brought rail to the community, and the community to rail.

'We've had all kinds of events around the station and along the line. You might call them stunts. I don't care what you call them, because the end result is so positive.'

These events include organising special journeys

apart from the daily rail service. There's the popular Santa special you might expect, but the Partnership has also arranged station to station walks, guided pub tours, festivals around Huddersfield Station's various anniversaries ('3,000 people were at the last one'), regular newsletters and posters, Burns' Night outings, musical evenings featuring jazz, folk and rock bands ('Three drivers and a Train Crew Supervisor from Leeds made up the band - they were brilliant') and even a specially-written play about rail privatisation. 'It started on the platform and continued on the train and in a pub down the line.'

Neil's particularly pleased that the station events don't charge for admission. 'We didn't want to be organising something for rich kids who might not appreciate it. We wanted to include everyone who wanted to come.'

One event transformed a carriage into a school-room and children, among other things on this 'Creative Trip', drew images of what they saw on their journey. Later local artists developed the ideas and they now decorate pillars on Huddersfield station. Neil says it brings them a sense of belonging.

And the outcome of these events is, Neil says, hugely positive. 'It brings people back to rail, or onto a train for the first time. Some people have no experience of rail, perhaps because it was an expensive and unreliable way to travel - which to be honest it was on this line a few years back. The service stopped at seven o'clock. You'd be amazed how distant the line had become. People had to ring up to ask how they could buy a ticket or even get the train to stop! Now they might start to use it again.'

'And if someone enjoys a

guided walk, they'll bring their friends and do it without a guide some other time. We're making rail popular again.'

All over the area there are glossy pamphlets advertising real ale pubs near stations. 'Jon Carter and I were forced to do a lot of the research for that leaflet,' Neil says with a hopeless attempt at a sigh. 'But I tell you, it's a real thrill when you see a group of people setting off on the Penistone Line with a leaflet you've been part of arranging.'

Neil also led discussions with Northern and Network Rail to have the line speed through the Cumberworth Tunnel between Denby Dale and Shepley increased from 30 to 50 mph after its renovation work. 'It might not sound much, but it's those few minutes and seconds that make us reliable. And if we're reliable, people use us,' he says. And his latest project is to open a disused line to cut the Huddersfield to Leeds trip to 40 minutes with limited stops.

With an attitude like his, it is small wonder that last year Neil won the National Rail Award for his 'outstanding personal contribution' to the industry.

And he manages a life away from the railways as well, even if he does use his rail pass to cross Europe pretty regularly. One of Neil's great pleasures is walking – which is just as well, as he doesn't have a driving licence for a car! He's only got to walk another 60-odd miles along the South Coast Path – that stretches from Minehead to Poole – to complete the whole route, and after that he has his eye on the 184-mile Thames Path.

It is a pleasure to meet such an energetic and positive man who is genuinely content with his life. 'The railway is a very



Keeping the public aware of the Partnership



Some of the pictures the children drew were recreated by local artists and displayed at the station



Huddersfield Station has a special plaque to commemorate the Penistone Line opening in July 1850

special place to work,' he concludes. 'People join in and support you whether you've got an appeal for someone or you're looking for help at a Partnership event. We all have bad days. But I'll tell you this – I wouldn't swap it.'



Neil shows off some of the local artwork



Keeping Track

WHAT THE UNION WAS DOING 100 AND 50 YEARS AGO

100 years ago ASLEF wasn't arguing with the RMT – but only because the RMT hadn't been formed! Instead there was rivalry between ourselves and the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS)! Half a century ago, like today, unemployment was a hot topic

100 YEARS AGO

In the April 1909 Journal, Organising Secretary Jno. Drummond was in fighting mood in 'the camp of the enemy'!

"During the month I have been at two inquiries before the Sheriff into the deaths of a young fireman and a shunter, at the Docks, in Glasgow. Formal verdicts in both cases were returned.

I have been in the camp of the enemy this last month. Mr. Brodie, Mr. Heaton Sinclair and myself were at Hamilton on February 21st and we had a nice meeting of about 30 men. We had not been long started when we found things were likely to be a bit lively, the words "Question", etc, coming thick and fast. However, we managed to hold our own and give them something to think over. We had an hour and a half of questions, and they were satisfactorily answered. We found that as per usual it was the "guards" we were fighting. They tell you if you put them out that the locomotive-men will go too. Is that not what we have complained about all the time? We are not a flock of sheep that requires any one or group of shepherds to watch over us; we can look over our own course. Figures were quoted to prove that we are not the weak body that they imagined we were. The voting on the North British Railway Conciliation Boards was 892 for the Associated and 1,347 for the A.S.R.S. These are facts that cannot be disputed and I may inform our friends that they will be larger next time."

50 YEARS AGO

In April 1959 the Editor's Notes commented on 'The Tories and Unemployment', discussing the very topical point of whether a slow-down in the economy directly affects transport ...

"Our own members as transport workers have a vital interest in this matter of the general level of unemployment. True it is that much of the developing redundancy in our own industry is due to modernisation; and so far as that aspect is concerned this Society, as is well known, has taken effective steps to safeguard the interests of locomotivemen.

"But quite apart from modernisation, there should be no dubiety in the mind of any railwayman as to the effect of Tory policy on unemployment among railway staff. When any Government deliberately sets out (as the Tories have done) to slow down the wheels of industry and foster a deflationary economy to suit their own ends, the results are immediately felt in transport. Ill-regulated, stupid competition between road and rail (another product of Tory policy) is bad enough in itself; and to that is now to be added a steady dwindling in the total amount of traffic available to be carried.

"The opportunity to right this disastrous trend will not be long delayed; and when it comes at the next General Election it is our earnest hope that every "Associated" member will assist by work and vote to return a Labour Government with a mandate for PROGRESS AND SECURITY to replace stagnation and unemployment."

Extracts selected and edited by Jane Pimlott

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LEARNING TO ORGANISE, ORGANISING TO LEARN

Scottish Union Learning Fund Project Worker **Jim Baxter** reports on Scotland's first Learning Forum held in Perth in February



ASLEF's 'Proud To Educate' programme is buzzing in Scotland – and its Learning Forum on 'Learning and Organising' drew an impressive list of speakers, including John Park MSP, Thomas Walker of the STUC, Paul Mooney of Stow College TU Education Department, District Organiser Kevin Lindsay, EC member Hugh Bradley – and myself. Forum participants, drawn from nine Scottish branches, were union learner reps, branch secretaries and company council members.

Events began on Saturday after an informal buffet lunch which allowed delegates to meet and catch up with each other. Kevin Lindsay opened the event, welcomed everybody and introduced the first guest speaker of the weekend – John Park MSP, the Shadow spokesperson on Skills in the Scottish Parliament for the Labour Party.

SKILLS WE CAN TRANSFER



JOHN is currently in the process of seeing a motion through Parliament on Modern Apprenticeships and he spoke of how this could be of use to the rail industry. One comment that he made that struck a note with all present was when he spoke about 'highly skilled workforces with no paper work to show their

educational worth'. In the current climate – with driver's jobs at risk – the need for us to be able to show transferable skills is greater than ever.

After his speech John took questions. Two that particularly stood out were on union learner rep release and sustainable funding for the learning projects. He said that as an ex union convener he believed that more statutory right to time off was needed for all reps and not just union learner reps. He added that he would like to see the model used in countries like Sweden and Denmark for time off for learning on Scotland's statute book. He also confirmed that he would support a government fund to guarantee the future of the union learning agenda.

ASLEF AT THE FOREFRONT



KEVIN LINDSAY spoke of the great strides ASLEF have taken, over the past few years, to now be at the forefront of union learning in Scotland. He confessed to his own cynicism towards the learning agenda in the very early days, some ten years ago – and how he had come to see the merit of unions

taking the lead in learning both in the workplace and socially. He outlined his role as Vice Chair of the recently-formed Scottish Union Learning Board and of the success of ASLEF's two European Social Fund bids that allows us to deliver free and shift-friendly learning in the workplace.

He also told the story of how one of our Union Learner Reps had used his new-found talents to get the ear of both himself and Hugh Bradley for an hour and a half. Colin McAteer, the Learner Rep for Dundee, had just completed a cookery course that he had organised for staff in Dundee station. Kevin and Hugh were due to attend the

branch so Colin invited them to dinner to try out his skills. Colin then spent the time discussing the issues that were affecting his branch to his now captive audience!

DEVELOPING SKILLS



PART of STUC Development Officer Thomas Walker's remit is to oversee ASLEF's Scottish Union Learning Fund project – so he knows our learning agenda well. Thomas gave a detailed overview of union learning in Scotland from its inception in 2000 and spoke of the imminent update of the Scottish

Government's Skills Strategy. Trade unions hope it will contain something more tangible than the original document.

Saturday's session concluded with a workshop on Organising and Learning ('Making the Link'). In running this, I wanted delegates to consider how they, as reps, use learning as part of the organising agenda.

MOVING ON FROM MUTUAL LEARNING



EC member Hugh Bradley opened business on Sunday with an historical account of the Mutual Improvement Classes (MIC) that were run in most depots prior to rail privatisation. He said we'd moved away from that ethos of educating and supporting each other – but that union-led learning was now

helping to fill that void. He explained where we were with learning agreements, identifying companies that had agreements and those still to do so.



PAUL MOONEY, a Trade Union tutor from Stow College in Glasgow, led the second workshop. Paul has been involved in delivering courses for our members throughout Scotland for many years. The workshop stimulated a good debate as Paul asked about ULR integration into ASLEF at local and

branch level. He asked how we use an additional rep (the union learner rep) to our advantage in the workplace but also how we make them accountable to their branch. He also asked if learning should be part of the branch agenda along with local level and health and safety reports.

I was the final speaker and took the opportunity to bring delegates up to date with our current SULF project and how it should develop over the next two years. I also spoke about ASLEF putting forward a motion on sustainable funding for union led workplace learning to the forthcoming STUC conference. We concluded agreeing that Union Learning Reps needed to be fully absorbed into the union and that we must get out the message of proactive trade unionism using the learning agenda.

LONGSIGHT CELEBRATES TONY 'SULLY' SULLIVAN

AT the Longsight branch meeting in February we were extremely honoured to have our retiring Brother Tony Sullivan join us for a presentation.

Tony joined the rail industry and ASLEF in 1960 as a Engine Cleaner at Agecroft, He moved to Patricroft in 1966 and on to Longsight in 1967. He passed out as a Driver in 1974, treading the rails on the West Coast Main Line until his well deserved retirement. Tony's character, comradeship and dedication to the role was the epitome of a train driver. He was revered and held in high esteem by all his colleagues in the industry and he will be sorely missed. If you asked any of his colleagues what sticks in their mind about Tony, I'm sure they will agree it is the ever-present 'Ciggy and Cup Of Tea'!

Tony was the founding



No ciggie, no tea, just Tony!

member of the Longsight Welfare Fund many years ago and his work in that field has been greatly appreciated by everyone who has benefited from the fund.

Many thanks to the Piccadilly Self-Help Fund and Brother

John Young for the framed pictures that we present to our retired members. Longsight Branch wishes Brother Sullivan all the very best for his retirement.

Alan Moss - Longsight Branch

65% ATTENDANCE AT LLANDUDNO!

IN a break with tradition the January meeting for the Llandudno Junction Branch was held in the Mail Coach Inn in the lovely historic walled town of Conwy. 13 of the 19 members attended, and welcomed guest speakers Bro Richie Cash (company council rep Arriva Trains) and Bro Colin Smith (District 3 Organiser)

Bro Cash spoke at some length on a number of topics and local issues as well as reporting the latest position on ATW's pay offer.

Bro Smith spoke informatively and with great passion about the wider issues effecting members. He stressed how the present financial situation was impacting on our, and other, companies both within and outside the railway industry.

Both speeches were well received and followed by rigorous questioning - all of which were answered in a most professional manner.

After discussions a resolution was passed supporting Bro Cash's recommendation that ASLEF accepts ATW's latest pay offer.



Back left to right: Dave Hill, Colin Smith, Graham Blackett, Martin Green, Richie Cash. Middle left to right: Allan Barnes, Barry Taylor, Russell Jones, Chris Warren, Arthur Stradling. Front left to right: Nigel Forrest, Tony Hill, Garth Shingles.

At the close of the meeting Bro Smith presented Arthur Stradling and Allan Barnes with certificates for completing stage one staff reps course, and presented Allan with his 30 year ASLEF badge.

Finally Graham Blackett was presented with a crystal decanter and a bottle of malt whiskey in recognition of his 30 years on the railway - and in thanks for his many years service as Branch Secretary.



Left to right: Graham Blackett, Colin Smith, Allan Barnes

DOWN THE LINE

NORWICH RE-UNION 17 APRIL

The Norwich Branch is holding its retired members' annual reunion and get-together on Friday 17 April. The venue is the Arkwright Social Club in Hall Road, Norwich and the event will begin between 1930 - 2000 and end at eleven. As usual a free bar and buffet will be provided. All retired ASLEF staff are invited and neighbouring retired staff will also be made most welcome.

All the retired drivers would like to thank the younger lads at the Norwich branch who have once again agreed to fund the evening from the Loco Welfare Fund. Without their help and generosity we couldn't possibly put on such a grand event.

John Pipe - RMS Norwich

HITHER GREEN 1 MAY REUNION

The 2009 Hither Green Annual Reunion, organised by the Hither Green Traincrew Welfare and Social Club, will be held on Friday 1 May in the Hither Green Railway and Social Club, Beacon Road, Higher Green, London SE13, commencing at 1900 hours. Everyone associated with Hither Green depot past or present welcome. For further information contact the branch secretary John Staggs.

DONCASTER REUNION 28 APRIL

The retired ASLEF members reunion in Doncaster to be held at the Doncaster Trades Club in the Frenchgate Shopping Centre from 1600 hours on Tuesday 28 April will also mark 120 years of the branch's history. All retired and employed members are welcome. For further information contact Mark Wright on 07825955831 or Branch Secretary Kevin Beresford on 07900130950.

SWANSEA MEETING BUILDS LINKS

SWANSEA High St branch convened an open meeting in January to discuss building stronger links between local ASLEF branches in south Wales and the Labour Party and the wider Labour movement. A high profile panel included the Welsh Finance Minister and Chair of the Welsh Affairs Select Committee.

Branch Chair Steve Williams opened proceedings before Aberavon MP Hywel Francis outlined his own personal history with ASLEF including links built by his father Dai, the south Wales miners' leader. He emphasised the importance of union involvement during the 2008 local elections which saw five council seats won for Labour in the area, bucking the national trend.

Swansea East MP Sian James thanked ASLEF for its ongoing support, outlining her background in the rail industry. She stressed the need for policies to inspire trade unionists while Andrew Davies AM drew attention to the Assembly's record on developing Welsh rail infrastructure and called for closer



The top table as Swansea branches out

links between unions and the Labour party to protect jobs in the current climate.

District Organiser Stan Moran led contributions from the floor underscoring the need for the development of Welsh freight infrastructure in the context of the economic

situation while EC Member Brian Corbett cautioned against Network Rail's plans to reduce track maintenance and renewal work. The meeting also heard from representatives from Cardiff and Port Talbot branches.

James McGowan
ASLEF Head of Policy

DONNY REUNITED – 120 YEARS ON

THE Doncaster branch is organising a retired members reunion with a difference at the Doncaster Trades Club on 28 April - different because the event will also mark 120 years of the branch's existence.

The first recorded meeting of Donny's drivers and firemen was held on 14 April 1889 at the Turf Tavern. That meeting resolved to form an ASLEF branch, which it duly did two weeks later. By the end of the century 52 members had joined.

The earliest minutes to have been uncovered date from 30 March 1890 when G.S. Marshall was secretary and W. Chapman was in the chair. At that meeting it was agreed to hold a General Meeting at the Turf to which the General Secretary would be invited. The branch decided to lash out 2/6p in bill printing!

Those early minutes often contain references to branch members claiming for a day's suspension, often for passing a signal at danger. Bro W. Chapman claimed for one day's suspension for over-running Doncaster Up Platform on 2 Feb 1914. Bro. H. Lockwood was paid for his two day suspension 'for mistaking signals at New England North'.

By 1914 the Committee had taken to meeting not in the pub, but in Hyde Park Adult School, where it was agreed that 'no Goods or Mineral Trains should be allowed to exceed 50 ordinary 10-ton wagons in



TURF TAVERN – The Turf Tavern was the venue of the first recorded meeting of Doncaster's drivers and firemen in April 1889. As a result, two weeks later an ASLEF branch was formed. The pub was demolished in 1968.

order to be manipulated with safety'.

The wording of the motions were in a different tone than we find today. Branch members 'failed to understand and lamented' the decision of the manager Mr Gresley to 'refuse to accept a deputation'. We don't really go in for 'lamentation' any more! If Mr Gresley refused the branch officers were to 'submit the appeal to the Board of Directors of the G.G. Rly'.

The branch also in 1915 found that it was disenfranchised from 'Labour Representation Doncaster Division' and so was unable to take part in 'the work'. It also gave the delegate to the union's annual meeting, Bro. W. J. Crookes, a free hand 'except on the question of Fusion'. It also 'asked Mr. Cole to recommend that all men



TRADES DONNY – It's a long way from the Turf to the Trades Club where the branch meets today

employed in the Loco Dept at Carr Sheds be granted the privilege of the cheap excursion to Mablethorpe in conjunction with the Traffic Dept in June'.

Two very modern touches from 1914 are the call for the 8 hour day and the motion to 'ask the Gen. Office if the Branch is in order in joining the Railway Nationalisation Society'.

There are also very human touches, like the 'letter of condolence to be sent to the relative of our dearest member Bro. J. M. Curtis'. This shows that although many things may have changed over the years, the same sense of fraternity and comradeship that existed in our grades in these early days has endured. I am sure that will be demonstrated at our reunion on 28 April at the Doncaster Trades Club from 1600 hours.

Mark Wright LLR – Doncaster Branch



YOU TELL US

These are the pages where you talk to us. We welcome your letters, either by mail to the Journal at 9 Arkwright Road London NW3 6AB or by email to journal@aslef.org.uk

Because of our space constraints, please try to keep your contributions as short as you can.

This month we continue our STAR LETTER feature. The immensely lucky winner will pocket a rich range of ASLEF regalia!

STOP RDW AND FREE POTENTIAL VACANCIES

I completely agree with Bro D Morgan's letter in the March Journal. We, like many other industries, are feeling the impact of the economic downturn. As well as FOCs, passenger operators now appear to be in financial trouble and are threatening withdrawal of services with a resulting impact on drivers' jobs.

We need decisive leadership now. The union seem to be in a time lag - we should be anticipating events not reacting to them. Protecting our jobs should be the union's top priority and therefore all rest day working should be stopped immediately to free potential vacancies countrywide.

Paul Barber - Freightliner Heavy Haul - Eastleigh

THANKS FOR SUPPORT

I AM writing to express my thanks and gratitude to ASLEF, for the Society's assistance and support I have received during

JOBS ARE THE MAIN CONCERN



I WAS recently entrusted by the membership of Edinburgh No1 Branch with a Local Rep position. Clearly, this is a very difficult time for all of us employed by DB Schenker and my term will present many challenges. In the face of threats to our jobs some unpalatable choices have had to be made - with the

likely possibility of more to come.

Saving jobs is the overriding challenge that we face throughout the company, and we must do whatever we can to secure drivers' positions. Reduced hours working has been offered at other depots, and may yet come to us. I would say to all those offered this

option that you have an absolute moral-duty to opt for it, making a small sacrifice to help secure your own and your colleagues jobs. If you can't make this small sacrifice, what is the point of being in a Union?

Fraternally.

Bro H Ezzedine LLC - Millerhill

my recent unwarranted disciplinary action from EWS.

Far be it from me to allude to any apparent pattern of unfair actions by EWS in recent editions of the journal, but suffice to say that I am more than happy with the compensation received. I can now retire with dignity, thanks to the work done by ASLEF's Lead Officer for EWS, Nick Whitehead, and more especially, Company Council rep, Nick Sandhu.

I would also like to express my thanks to colleagues at Dollands Moor for their active, and moral support.

I wish them all well in an uncertain future for the depot, in the hope that the situation might not be as bleak as has been portrayed.

Sincerely,
John Brooks

THANKS MICK BRADBURY!

WE would like to place on record our thanks to Brother Mick Bradbury who has recently resigned from the National Express East Anglia Company Council.

Mick has served on the council since they were first set up during the British Rail re-organisations of the early nineties. He was part of the team during the privatisation of the railways that saw the creation of the Great Eastern franchise and who dealt with the issue of restructuring that came with it.

Mick brought to this council a great deal of experience and knowledge and was a steady and calming influence to us all. His skills, knowledge

and good humour will be greatly missed by this council and the members he represented.

He is a true stalwart of the trade union movement, a loyal servant of ASLEF and remains a great friend. We on the council wish Mick all the best for the future.

Alan Edwards, Steve Wright, Nick Silk - NX East Anglia Company Council

SUCCESSFUL HEAD OFFICE VISIT

ON behalf of the Buxton and Peak Forest Branch, I would like to thank everyone involved in our visit to Head Office on 15 January.

Many thanks to Dave Bennett for showing us around and informing us about the history of the building and showing us the union's various departments, explaining what they do.

Thanks also to Keith Norman and members of the EC for taking the time to socialise with us afterwards.

Paul Costello Secretary - Buxton and Peak Forest branch

ARKWRIGHT VISIT

I'M sorry for the delay in writing this but I'm writing to say a sincere 'thank you' to all the staff at Arkwright Road for the most enjoyable visit to head office that I had with the Gillingham branch on 12 February. It was a real eye-opener. I didn't realise how involved it can be to run a union.

Special thanks must go to our general secretary. Keith presented me with a bronze medallion during the visit. It is something I will cherish for the rest of my life.

A. E. Midwinter retired driver - Rochester

DON'T RESURRECT PRODUCTIVITY ...

I'VE read the article written by J. Doyle the Virgin CC Rep, in the February Journal - and I must ask why has he mentioned 'productivity talks'?

Change of address form

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Phone.....

Branch.....

Membership No.....

Employer.....

Being concerned, I questioned my own Council rep about the comments and he has assured me that there has been no formal approach made by management to enter into such talks.

Has Mr Doyle such a short memory that he has forgotten about the 'town hall' meeting held in Preston last year, in which he participated, along with the full Virgin Council and depot LLC reps? I would like to remind him that at this meeting, which was chaired by our lead officer, the majority view (as we are still democratic), of CC reps and LLC reps, representing the views of their members, was 'that previously rejected productivity issues should not be resurrected' and as far as they were concerned they are no longer negotiable.

Paul Stannard LLC
Chairman - Liverpool Virgin Drivers.

TRAPS CAME FROM THE MILITARY ...

I BELIEVE I have the answer for Bro Bailey of Longsite, who asked in the March Journal where the term 'traps' for our kit bags comes from.

As a retired loco man myself, I too often wondered about the term. I'm now a working member at Barrow Hill Roundhouse in Chesterfield, where I started my career in 1955.

I mentioned Bro Bailey's letter to a colleague, another working member retired from HM forces. He knew what I was talking about right away.

He explained that in the military – and especially the army and navy – the interlocking mess tins were referred to as 'Mess Traps'. They were carried in the small pack commonly known as a haversack, which were much favoured by loco men prior to the advent of the driver's bag.

In the Navy, the aluminium pots – pans, dishes and tea-pot – were generally referred to as 'Mess Traps' which was possibly an abbreviation of 'Trappings' when the men lived, slept and ate as gun crew on a 'Mess Deck' (which

might be the origin of 'mess room'). Many railway men served in the armed forces during the two world wars and perhaps brought the term back with them into general railway talk.

David M. Darwin retired
EWS driver

... OR MAYBE FROM THE CONTINENT?

THE Oxford Dictionary defines 'traps' as 'personal belongings or baggage'. It seems it is a shortened version of 'trappings' which comes from a Middle English word 'trap', which, in turn, comes from the Old French word 'drap' by a change of pronunciation of the 'd' to a 't'. 'Trappings' can also mean a horse's harness or someone's regalia of office (like a mayor).

I imagine (but can't be sure) that the word 'drap' is aligned with the modern French word 'drapeau', a flag, which was/is often a personal emblem.

I seem to recall hearing the word 'trappings' used by a relative in North Yorkshire (not Lancashire!) about 45 years ago. It may well be one of those terms that fall out of use in some parts of the country but stay in use in others.

Eric Stuart RMS

JUSTICE AT LAST FOR MINDER

BACK in 2005 I applied to be a minder driver. I was refused as I had recently received a written warning for a minor disciplinary matter and it was deemed by the DTM that I was not suitable due to this. Every time I applied afterwards I was told I was not suitable.

I was advised by my LLC that after one year I was entitled to the minder driver's rate of pay. I sent off all the relative correspondence between myself and my managers to my company council rep who is based at York.

To cut a long story short, my grievance was conceded in December and I received my back pay for three years and I am now on the minders rate of pay.

Could I thank the following

people through the letters page: Firstly Howard Bridgemen, my local LLC at the time (have a happy retirement, Howard!). Also Robin Coultard, my company council rep, Pauline Cawood the Leeds branch secretary and finally Rob Porter, Company Council East secretary for keeping me informed every step of the way.

Andy Riley
Driver – Skipton

SUPPORT DURING ILLNESS

JUST a few lines to thank my colleagues old and new at Blackpool, Manchester, Sheffield and Cleethorpes for their concern and support for my wife and family during my long illness.

I most especially want to thank my colleague at Cleethorpes, Alan Stringer and his wife Sally for their support. It was well above and beyond the 'call of duty'.

Although he is my Company Councillor, Alan took an awful lot of pressure off my family by being my spokesman and letting people know my progress. Many, many thanks, Alan and Sally. You are the best.

Les Gibbins Driver –
Cleethorpes

THANKS FOR BACKING CRAIG

PLEASE extend my thanks to ASLEF's Plymouth branch for their generous donation of £25 with regard to the Craig Moate Appeal.

For your information, Craig has just been selected to represent Great Britain at the 2009 INAS FID Global Games in July – a particularly important Championships for him as he moves forward.

My thanks for ASLEF's generous support.

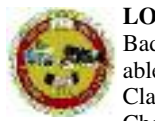
Tracey McCillen National
Director – UK Sports
Association for People with
Learning Disability

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SALISBURY BADGES A special numbered production limited to 500 badges celebrating Salisbury Depot featuring five locos fanning out in front of Salisbury Cathedral. The badges are available for £5 each plus a fixed £2 postage and packaging for up to every four badges purchased. Please make cheques payable to 'ASLEF Salisbury Branch Funds' and send to c/o Mr Jonathan Morris, 26 Winding Way, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 9EA.



LONGSIGHT BRANCH has produced a Commemorative Badge Limited to 500 Numbered Copies. They are available for £5.00 plus £1 p&p from the Branch Secretary Fred Clarke at 80 Brookfield Avenue, Poynton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK12 1JE. Please make cheques payable to F.Clarke.

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DIESEL HYDRAULIC ITEMS wanted by collector. Anything considered, especially speedos, power handles etc. Rob 01822 834 150

TRAIN DRIVER COLLECTS BR 33056/ SERIES DRIVERS MANUALS 33056/116 Class 303 Strathclyde & 33070/9. 33056/117 class 318 33056/118 class 318 33056/126 class 318 and 33070/12. 33056/130 & 131, 132, 133, 134 33070/16 class 319. Contact Lee 07919127972 or e-mail ld002d1042@blueyonder.co.uk

MAKING TUNNELS –



THE HOLE STORY

Train drivers spend more time in tunnels than most occupations in the country. Yet how often do we look around and marvel at the enterprise and imagination of the people who constructed them? Seldom, I suppose, as they become a familiar part of the working day – but their construction has a fascinatingly rich past – and is vital to our future ...

ANY prospective tunneller's first concern is to examine and understand the type of soil in the area, and to assess how it will react to having holes dug beneath it. The development of geotechnical engineering and tunnelling technology means that these days large tunnels can be constructed in any type of ground – even in sand below the water table.

This wasn't the case in the 19th century when London's underground began to be built, and one of the reasons for its development was the capital's solid non-porous London clay. The favoured (and indeed, only) method in the 1860s was the highly disruptive 'cut and cover' system. This involved digging a huge hole, inserting track and a roof, and covering it up again. It was basic, but it worked.

The next development was the Brunels' literally ground-breaking tunnel under the Thames between Rotherhithe and Wapping. This drove a horizontal shaft under the river with a shield at the front,

arranged like an upright chessboard with space for a man to dig in each of its 36 sections. The cage-like shield edged along protecting the diggers from falling soil and building a roof as it progressed. Begun in 1826, it took until 1841 to complete – but when it was finished it had set a template that is still used across the world.

Virtually the same system was used for the Jubilee Line extension, except that by now timber supports had given way to a cast iron variety and fast-drying concrete was sprayed to the sides, hardening sufficiently quickly to provide a safe and efficient lining. An updated shield model was employed for the cross-Channel link, which had the added problem of passing through a whole range of different soils on its entry to St Pancras.

WHAT CAN GO WRONG?

Today's civil engineers spend years making carefully crafted models to anticipate difficulties, but this is a difficult and

dangerous business to predict. There are endless variables of length, depth, soil type and water pressure. In recent years we have seen tunnels collapse in construction in Munich (1994), Shanghai (2003) and San Paulo (2007).

Another major problem is how engineers can ensure the buildings above are not disturbed by settlement damage from tunnelling. The solution is a technique called 'compensation grouting'. This involves installing hollow steel tubes ('tube a manchettes') in the ground between the tunnel and the building. During tunnelling, grout (liquid cement) is injected from any one of a large number of holes in the steel tubes into the ground to compensate for the ground movements being caused by the tunnel excavation.

The technique was used to protect Big Ben from tilting during the construction of Westminster Station for the Jubilee Line Extension, and will shortly be employed tunnelling next to the Coliseum in Rome.

It was also used for the Channel Tunnel's passage under Kings Cross. The tubes for this were built from a disused Victorian tunnel that was discovered and cleared on the east side of the station.

UNDERGROUND CONGESTION

Of course one other major headache is the number of obstacles a city has under the surface – the masses of existing tunnels, pipes for water and gas and even pile foundations. This was a particular problem in building Amsterdam's metro as

the city's buildings are all constructed on deep piles – the majority made of timber – driven into the ground through 12 metres of insubstantial clay and peat.

Nearer home, the Crossrail project will involve major new tunnels and stations constructed beneath many buildings in central London – both being considerably larger than a typical London Underground station. The latest tunnelling innovations, along with compensation grouting, will hopefully mean it will be built safely without damaging overlying buildings.

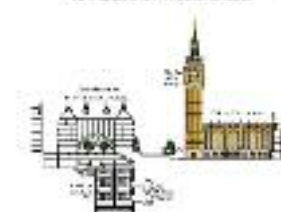
Professor Robert Mair believes tunnelling is essential for the very future of city life. He argues that there is simply not enough space on the surface for everything demanded by urban life. That is why last year Shanghai, for example, employing 98 boring machines, built 140 kilometres of tunnel through soil described as having the 'texture of toothpaste'.

Building tunnels is a fascinating subject, and I hope I've done it some justice. Next time you're speeding through a tunnel, pause for a moment to marvel ...

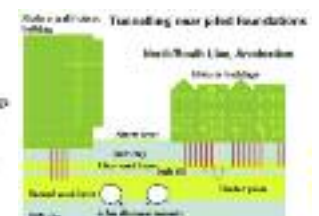
● Chris Proctor wrote this story after going along to a lecture given by Cambridge University's Professor Robert Mair at the Royal Society last month. As part of its objective to 'share science', the Society organises regular free early-evening public lectures at its home at Carlton House Terrace in London. Further information is available at www.royalsociety.org



Proximity of Jubilee Line Extension station to Palace of Westminster



Illustrations: Prof. Robert Mair



Crossrail - Tottenham Court Road Station

ASLEF'S legal services – your rights for their wrongs!

FREE LEGAL ADVICE ASLEF also provides first class free legal advice – both for members and for their dependents. In the first six months of this year we have secured £1,442,369 in compensation claims! Call the helpline on 0808 100 8009

EMERGENCIES If you are an ASLEF member who is arrested or being interviewed by the police and need legal assistance – day or night – you can call the members' Emergency Hotline on 0800 587 7530.

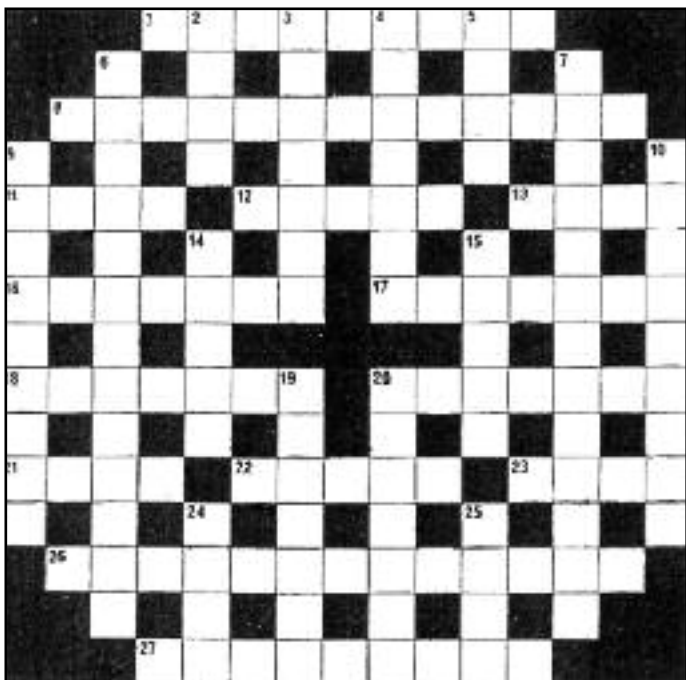
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ASLEF *more than just a union*



Prize Crossword No. 36

set by TLC



Solution to Crossword No 35 which appeared in the March edition of the ASLEF Journal. Congratulations to **Mark Maloney** from **York**.

ACROSS 3 Traction 8 Trio 9 Marylebone 10 Scam 11 Upon 13 Easel 17 Angels 18 Salads 19 Torso 22 View 24 Arab 25 Accrington 26 Cool 27 Sprinter **DOWN** 1 Track 2 Commuters 4 Rayon 5 Crewe 6 Irons 7 Needless 12 Ouse 14 Allowance 15 Martians 16 Asti 20 Recur 21 Onion 22 Vague 23 Wagon

Thanks for all your responses to the 35th ASLEF crossword in the March edition. If you complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB by the 14th of the issue month.

ACROSS

1. At the end of your journey – he relieves you of your 'ticket to ride' (9)
8. No charge to go in (9,4)
11. It's found at the end of your arm – (4)
12. Important, essential (5)
13. Not shut (4)
16. Fencing, enclosure (7)
17. Carry out (7)
18. Youth (7)
20. Bewitch (7)
21. Not far away (4)
22. Proposal (5)
23. Cooking device (4)
26. Early intimation (7,6)
27. Platform in the cab for the loco crew (9)

Church (7)

5. A Dyke in Wales was named after him (4)
6. They give proof of who people are (8,5)
7. Useful opinion (7,6)
9. Slow down on your approach here (5,4)
10. Part of your stomach (9)
14. ----- of Dock Green (5)
15. Tranquillity (5)
19. Not enough money (7)
20. Permanent (7)
24. Milk pudding (4)
25. Let it stand, - printers instruction (4)

DOWN

2. Leave out (4)
3. Permanent (7)
4. Singing group, often in

The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25



Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....



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24-hour breakdown service	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency towing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency roadside assistance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency towing and roadside assistance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency towing and roadside assistance and more	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency towing and roadside assistance and more and more	✓	✓	✓	✓



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- Comprehensive travel insurance cover options
- Comprehensive travel insurance cover options

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- Annual Multi trip travel insurance
- Adventure Travel Insurance
- Gap Travel Insurance
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overseas holiday home

With so many different holiday home insurance policies to choose from, it's often difficult to know where to begin. However, with more than 20 years' experience, you can be confident that Quotedirect can find you the right cover at the right price. Our holiday home insurance policies offer comprehensive cover for all types of overseas properties.

- Examples of the benefits of cover we can provide:
- Comprehensive contents cover
- Comprehensive liability cover
- Emergency towing
- Public Liability
- Emergency towing



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warranty

Quotedirect Direct has teamed up with All Warranty to offer comprehensive vehicle warranty from just £29 a year. Cover protects against unforeseen and/or wear and tear, and includes the cost of repair and replacement of parts.



We offer a choice of two warranty packages, which you select. Both are available on the web.

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uk holiday home

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- Examples of the benefits of cover we can provide:
- Insurance
- Comprehensive contents cover
- Comprehensive liability cover
- Emergency towing
- Public Liability
- Emergency towing



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landlord

As a landlord it's important to protect your investments and as a landlord it's important to protect your investments. We offer a range of products for your business. We offer a range of products for your business.



- Examples of the benefits of cover we can provide:
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- Comprehensive liability cover
- Emergency towing
- Public Liability
- Emergency towing

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